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NEWS

Urges Treaty Ratification

Percy Backs Russian Detente

Sen. Charles H. Percy, onetime boy wonder of the business world and now a long-shot GOP presidential prospect, moved today into the forefront of Republicans advocating "conciliation" with Russia.

The 46-year-old Illinois Senator, who strongly endorsed the U. S. Soviet consular treaty during the weekend, told UPI in an interview:

• Soviet leaders see a "tremendous worldwide advantage" for them if they can help settle the Vietnam war. Sen. Percy believes premier Alexei Kosygin made such an effort during the recent U. S. bombing pause.

• Any reduction of U. S. ground forces in Western Europe should be decided upon only after full NATO consultation and in terms of Europe's over-all pattern of change. Sen. Percy thus endorsed the approach of fellow Republican Sens. Jacob Javits, N. Y., and Thruston Morton, Ky.

• Whatever the Senate does on the troop issue or related foreign policy questions, President Johnson's hands "should not be bound so tight that it does not give him leeway to take the next step" toward easing East-West relations.

• He would like to see the Administration be "more specific" in its Vietnam peace negotiations by suggesting a time and place for truce talks. Sen. Percy said the U. S. might assure North Vietnam that if its representatives showed up for negotiations the bombing would stop, if the communists showed a reciprocal reduction of military activity. His proposal represented only a shading of difference from the Administration's present position.

• It is too early for him to

SEN. PERCY

support Michigan Gov. George Romney or anyone else for the Republican presidential nomination. But he has asked his admirers not to set up any "Percy for President" headquarters because he is not now, and does not intend to become, a candidate. Sen. Percy said he would make a candidate choice before the 1968 convention.

The Senator and his wife were Gov. Romney's guests over the weekend. In a speech Saturday to the Michigan State convention, Sen. Percy delivered one of the strongest indorsements of the consular treaty yet heard from anyone, Democrat or Republican.

He termed the pact, now pending in the Senate Foreign Relations committee. "An important symbol of America's readiness to join a world already in the process of readjustment." Countering the flood of anti-treaty mail he has been receiving, Sen. Percy said:

"It is my hope that the Republican Party will lead, not lag, in this gradual movement for detente. It is my conviction that the Republican Party must lead in a rational discussion of a flexible, creative foreign policy, leaving the cant and chauvinism to others.

"Our most immediate opening for conciliation lies in the U. S. Soviet consular convention," he said.

Sen. Percy told UPI he decided to back the treaty after private talks with Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Central Intelligence Director Richard Helms and others inside and outside the Government, including various diplomats and former CIA director Allen Dulles.

The Senator, who became president of Bell & Howell at 29, buttressed his knowledge of foreign trade last year by a swing thru Eastern Europe which took him from East Berlin to Moscow.

Treaty Support Only 7 Short?

The Johnson Administration is only seven votes shy of the two-thirds margin needed for Senate ratification of the U.S.-Soviet consular treaty, according to Sen. Thruston B. Morton (R., Ky.).

Sen. Morton said Sunday that 20 of the 36 Republicans in the Senate were ready to vote for the pact and about 40 of the Democrats favored it.

Thus, he said, a majority of the Senate now favors the treaty and GOP leader Everett Dirksen's support can swing the necessary two-thirds vote.

Sen. Dirksen has refused to commit himself publicly but Sen. Morton said the Illinois lawmaker gave him "the distinct impression that he would vote for it."

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